10.

Dr. *Hammond's* EXPOSITION

OF GAL. VI. 15.

For in CHRIST JESUS, *neither Circumciſion availeth any thing, nor Uncircumciſion, but a* NEW CREATURE.

AND

Biſhop *Hopkins's* EXPOSITION

OF JOHN iii. 5.

Except a Man be born of Water, *and of the* Spirit, *he cannot enter into the Kingdom of* GOD.

To be Compared with the

Late *Sermons* of Dr. *Stebbing* and Dr. *Skerrett* on the ſame *Texts*.

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BIBLIOTHECA·BODLEIANA

THE PREFACE

THE *Doctrine of* Regeneration *or the* New Birth *having within theſe ſix Months paſt been the Subject of Converſation, and of the* Pulpits *in ſeveral Parts of this Metropolis, as well as in ſome neighbouring Counties, occaſion'd by the Preaching of two or three Perſons, who have lately appear'd to propagate that Doctrine with greater* Zeal *and* Concern, *than for a long Time has been known in the Church of* England; *we thought it very expedient to let the World ſee what had been preach'd on that Subject by two Eminent Divines, forty or fifty Years ago, whoſe Abilities and Orthodoxy, ſcarce any Member of the Church of* England, *we believe, will diſpute, or call in queſtion.*

The Firſt *is the Subſtance or Extract of a Sermon by Dr.* Hammond *on* Gal. vi. 15. *Upon which Text there is juſt now publiſhed a Diſcourſe by Dr.* Stebbing, *entituled,* A Sermon on the New Birth, occaſioned by the Pretenſions of the *Methodiſts. The* Second *is an Extract from three Diſcourſes of Biſhop* Hopkins *on* John iii. 5. *upon which Text there is alſo a Sermon newly publiſh'd by Dr.* Skerret.

When the Reader ſhall have ſeriouſly compar'd what Biſhop Hopkins *and Dr.* Hammond *have ſaid in their Expoſitions of thoſe Texts, with the late Performances of the ſaid Drs.* Stebbing *and* Skerret *upon the ſame, he will, doubtleſs, diſcern a ſurprizing Difference in their Sentiments. Whether thoſe former, or theſe latter, Divines, are in the right, we determine not, but leave the Reader to apply them both to the Standard of Holy Writ, and to judge for himſelf, whether of them has* handled the Word of God *with the greater Simplicity; whether of them carries the clearer* Manifeſtation of the Truth; *and whether of them better* commend themſelves to his Conſcience in the Sight of God, 2 *Cor.* iv. 1,— 4. *And in Order to his forming a juſt Judgment, we recommend to his Obſervation the following Marks of a regenerate Perſon.* " Love to thoſe who " are truly godly, *ſays Biſhop* Hopkins, is a " certain and infallible Sign of *Regeneration*, " 1 *John* iii. 18. *We know that we are paſſed* " *from Death to Life, becauſe we love the Bre-* " *thren.* This is a *certain Sign* a mighty " Change is wrought in the *Heart*; for *natu-* " *rally* we are inclin'd to hate the *Children* of " God upon that very Account becauſe they " are *godly.*——*He that is born of the Fleſh,* " ſays the Apoſtle, *will perſecute and hate him* " *that is born of the Spirit*, becauſe he is the " Copy of that Original betwixt whom and " them there is an *Antipathy* founded in their " very Natures. Now when a Man who be- " fore did thus *hate*, and *ſcorn*, and *deſpiſe* the " People of God as a Company of *affected* and

" *turbulent*

" *turbulent* Hypocrites, ſhall find in himſelf a " *Love* and *Eſteem* for them; and ſhall ſee " the Beauty and Glory of that Holineſs that " before render'd them odious to them; this is " a Sign that *certainly* a mighty Change is " wrought upon *that* Man, and that he him- " ſelf is transformed into the Image of God, " becauſe he loves that Image in others. Now " this *Tryal* will proceed upon theſe two or " three Particulars.

" Firſt, *That this Love be to them becauſe they* " *are godly.* We may poſſibly love godly Men " for other Reſpects, becauſe they are wiſe or " learned, or becauſe poſſibly they love us, or " are related to us, but theſe are but *by* Re- " ſpects; and *Grace* hath no Intereſt at all in " them. That Love to the Godly that can aſ- " ſure us of being *godly* and *regenerate*, muſt " be a Love to the Children of God merely " becauſe they are *godly.*

" *Secondly*, As we muſt love them becauſe " they are godly, ſo the more godly they are " the more we ſhould love them. *My Delight*, " ſays DAVID, *is in the Saints, and in the ex-* " *cellent Ones of the Earth.* The more holy a " Child of God is, if we love him aright, the " more we ſhall love him.

" *Thirdly*, If we love ALL that are *godly*; " not only thoſe of our Temper, Conſtitution, " and Opinion in all Things, but ALL of " them, with a Valuation and Eſteem for

" them

" them, with a prizing Love, which the
" Image of God upon their Souls and Simili-
" tude to him challengeth; indeed our Fami-
" liarity and Intimacy may be with ſome of
" them more than with others, but our high
" and *cordial* Eſteem muſt be of ALL of them.
" Now try your ſelves by this, *Do you love the*
" BRETHREN? And ſo little truly is this Love
" to be found, that the Name of *Brethren* is
" become a *Mock* and a *Jeſt* by many; but is
" your *Delight in the Saints?* Do you account
" them the *excellent Ones of the Earth?* How
" few are there that love them that love God?
" Or if they do love them, it is poſſibly for
" other Reſpects and Reaſons; could you not
" love them better if they were not ſo *rigid*,
" *ſtrict* and *preciſe* as they are: Let ſuch know
" as St. *John* ſpeaks in 1 *John* v. 1. *He that*
" *loveth him that begetteth, loveth him that is*
" BEGOTTEN. It is in vain to think that we
" are *born* of God, if we have not a *ſincere*
" and *cordial Affection* for ALL thoſe that are
" Children of God and our BRETHREN."

Dr.

Dr. *Hammond's*

EXPOSITION

Of Gal. vi. 15.

For in Christ Jesus *neither Circumciſion availeth any thing, nor Uncircumciſion, but a* New Creature.

AMONGST all other Incumbrances and Delays in our Way to Heaven, there is none that doth ſo clog, ſo diſadvantage and backward us, and *in fine*, ſo caſt us behind in our Race, as a Contentedneſs in a *formal Worſhip* of God, an Acquieſcence and reſting ſatisfied in *outward* Performances.——

They that ſtand only on a fair ſpecious Outſide, and think all the Sap and Life of Religion lies in the Bark, they do *this* and *this*; theſe will have you *circumciſed*, and conſtrain you to a many burthenſome Ceremonies; meaſuring out Religion to you by the Weight, *thus much* is required of you to do.——— In brief, the Apoſtle here ſhews the Unprofitableneſs of all theſe, and ſets up the *inward* Sanctity and Renewedneſs of Heart againſt them all, as the only Thing that will ſtand us in ſtead, and appear

appear to be of any Weight in the Balance of the Sanctuary.———The Particle *but* in the Front of my Text is *excluſive* and *reſtrictive*, it excludes every Thing in the World from pretending to avail any Thing, from being believed to do us any Good. For by *Circumciſion* the Church of the *Jews*, and by *Uncircumciſion* the whole Profeſſion of Chriſtian Religion being underſtood, when he ſaith neither of theſe availeth any Thing, he forcibly implies that *all other Means*, *all Profeſſions*, *all Obſervances*, that Men think or hope to get Heaven by are to no Purpoſe, and that by conſequence it exactly reſtrains to the *new Creature*; there it is to be had, and no where elſe. The Subſtance of all the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe, and the Groundwork of mine ſhall be this one *Aphoriſm*, *Nothing is efficaciouſly available to Salvation, but a renewed, regenerated Heart.* For the Opening of which we will examine by Way of Doctrine, wherein this *new Creature* conſiſts, and then, by Way of *Uſe*, the Neceſſity of that, and Unprofitableneſs of all other plauſible pretending Means. And firſt *wherein this* new Creature *conſiſts.*

Now that you may conceive wherein it conſiſts, how this *new Man* is brought forth in us, by whom it is conceived, and in what Womb 'tis carried, I will require no more of you than to obſerve and underſtand with me what is meant by the ordinary Phraſe in our Divines, *a new Principle*, or *inward Principle of Life*, and that you ſhall do briefly thus. A Man's Body

Body is naturally a ſluggiſh, unactive, motionleſs, heavy Thing, not able to ſtir or move the leaſt animal Motion without a Soul to enliven it; without that 'tis but a Carcaſs as you ſee at Death; when the Soul is ſeparated from it, it returns to be but a Stock or Lump of Fleſh; the Soul beſtows all Life and Motion on it, and enables it to perform any Work of Nature. Again, the Body and Soul together conſidered in relation to ſomewhat above their Power and Activity, are as impotent and motionleſs as before the Body without the Soul. Set a Man to remove a Mountain, and he will heave perhaps to obey your Command, but in Event will do no more towards the diſplacing it, than a Stone in the Street could do; but now let an *omnipotent* Power be annext to this Man, let a *ſupernatural* Spirit be joined to this Soul, and then will it be able to overcome the proudeſt, ſtouteſt Difficulty in Nature. You have heard in the *primitive Church* of a Grain of Faith removing Mountains, and believe me, all Miracles are not yet out-dated. The Work of *Regeneration*, the beſtowing of a *ſpiritual Life* on one dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins; the making of a *Carcaſs* walk, the natural *Old-man* to ſpring again, and *move ſpiritually*, is as great a Miracle as that. Now the Soul in that it produces Life and Motion, the Exerciſe of Life in the Body is called a *Principle*, that is, a Spring or Fountain of Life, becauſe all comes from it; in like Manner, that which moves this Soul, and enables it to do that which naturally it could not; that which gives it a *new Life*, which

before it lived not; furniſheth it with ſpiritual Powers to quell and ſubdue all carnal Affections which before were too hard for it; this, I ſay, is called properly an *inward Principle*; and an *inward*, becauſe it is inwardly and ſecretly infuſed, doth not only outwardly aſſiſt us as an Auxiliary at a dead Lift, but is ſown and planted in our Hearts as a Soul to the Soul, to elevate and enable it above it ſelf; hath its Seat and Palace in the *regenerate Heart*, and there exerciſes Dominion, executes Judgment, and that is commonly either by Priſon or Baniſhment, it either fetters, or elſe expels all inſolent rebellious Luſts. Now the *new Principle*, by which not the Man, but the *new Man* the Chriſtian lives, is, in a Word, the SPIRIT of GOD, which unites it ſelf to the *regenerate Heart*, ſo that now he is ſaid to be a *godly* Man, a *ſpiritual* Man, from the GOD, from the SPIRIT, as before a *reaſonable* Man, from the Soul, from the Reaſon that inform'd, and ruled in him; which is noted by that Diſtinction in Scripture betwixt the Regenerate and Unregenerate, expreſt by a natural or animal, and a ſpiritual Man.—But now the *regenerate* Man which hath more than a Soul, *God's Spirit* to enliven him, he is of another Rank, πνευματικὸς, a *ſpiritual Man*, nay, only he properly a Chriſtian, becauſe he lives by Chriſt, *He lives, yet not he, but Chriſt liveth in him*, Gal. ii. 20.

This being premiſed, that now you know what this *new Creature* is, he that lives and moves by a *new Principle*, all that is behind will

will be clearlieſt preſented to you by reſolving theſe four Queſtions; *Firſt*, Whence it comes; *Secondly*, Where it lodges; *Thirdly*, When it enters; *Fourthly*, What Work it performs there.

To the *Firſt*, *Whence it comes*; The Anſwer is clear and punctual *John* iii. 3. ἄνωθεν *from above*, from whence comes every good, and eſpecially, every perfect Gift, *James* i. 17.

To the *Second* Queſtion, *Where it lodges*; my Anſwer is, in the Heart of Man, in the *whole Soul*; not in the Underſtanding, not in the Will, (a Diſtinction of Faculties invented by Philoſophers, to puzzle and perplex Divines, and put them to needleſs Shifts) but, I ſay, in the *whole Soul*, ruling and guiding it in all its Actions, enabling it to underſtand and will *ſpiritually*; conceived, I ſay, and born in the Soul, but nurſed and fed, and increas'd into a perfect Stature by the outward Organs and Actions of the Body, for by them it begins to expreſs and ſhew it ſelf in the World, by them the *Habit* is exerted and made perfect; the *Seed* ſhot up into an Ear; the Spring improved to Autumn, when the Tongue diſcourſes, the Hands act, the Feet run the Way of God's Commandments.———In brief, 'tis one Principle *within* us, doth every Thing that is *holy*, believes, repents, hopes, loves, obeys, and what not? And, conſequently, is effectually in every Part of Body and Soul, ſanctifying it to work *ſpiritually*, as an holy Inſtrument of

a divine inviſible Cauſe, that is, the HOLY GHOST that is in us and throughout us.

For the *Third* Queſtion, *When this* new Principle *enters*; firſt, you are to know, *that* comes into the Heart in a three-fold Condition; firſt as an * *Harbinger*; 2dly as a *private Gueſt*; 3dly as an *Inhabitant* or Houſe-keeper. As 'tis an *Harbinger*, ſo it comes to fit and prepare us for it ſelf; trims up, and ſweeps, and ſweetens the Soul, that it may be readier to entertain him when he comes to reſide; and that he doth (as the ancient Gladiators had their *Arma præluſoria*) by ſkirmiſhing with our Corruptions before he comes to give them a Pitch-battle; he brandiſhes a flaming Sword about our Ears; and as by a Flaſh of Lightning, gives us a ſenſe of a diſmal hideous State; and ſo ſomewhat reſtrains us from Exceſs and Fury; firſt, by a momentary Remorſe, then by a more laſting, yet not purifying Flame, the *Spirit of Bondage*. In ſum, every Check of Conſcience, every Sigh for Sin, every Fear of Judgment, every Deſire of Grace, every Motion or Inclination toward ſpiritual Good, be it never ſo ſhort-winded, is † *Præludium Spiritus*, a kind of *John* Baptiſt to CHRIST, ſomething that God ſent before to prepare the Ways of the Lord.

Secondly, When this SPIRIT comes a *Gueſt* to lodge with us, then is he ſaid to enter; but till by Actions and frequent obliging Works, he

* *Forerunner to prepare a Lodging.* † *An* Harbinger.

he makes himſelf known to his Neighbours, as long as he keeps his Chamber, till he declare himſelf to be there, ſo long he remains a *private ſecret Gueſt*: And that's called the Introduction of the Form, that makes a Man to be *truly regenerate*; when the Seed is ſown in his Heart, when the Habit is infuſed; and that is done ſometimes diſcernibly, ſometimes not diſcernibly, but ſeldom; as when *Saul* was called in the Midſt of his Madneſs, *Acts* ix. he was certainly able to tell a Man the very Minute of his Change, of his being made a *New Creature*. Thus they which have long lived in an enormous antichriſtian Courſe, do many times find themſelves ſtrucken on a ſudden, and are able to date their *Regeneration*, and tell you punctually how old they are in the Spirit. Yet becauſe there be many Preparations to *this Spirit*, which are not this Spirit; many Preſumptions in our Hearts falſe-grounded; many Tremblings and Jealouſies in thoſe that have it; great Affinity between Faith natural and ſpiritual; ſeeing 'tis a *Spirit* that thus *enters*, and not as it did *light on* the Diſciples in a *bodily Shape*, 'tis not an eaſie matter for any one to define the Time of his Converſion. Some may gueſs ſomewhat nearer than others, as remembring a ſenſible Change in themſelves; but in a Word, the ſureſt Diſcerning of it, is in its *working*, not at its *Entring*. I may know that now I have *the Spirit* better than at what Time I came to it.

The third Condition in which *this Spirit* comes into our Hearts, is as an *Inhabitant* or Houſe-keeper. " * The SPIRIT, ſaith *Auſtin*, " firſt is in us, then dwells in us; before it " dwells, it helps to believe: When it dwells, " it helps and perfects, and improves our Faith, " and accompliſhes it with all other concomi- " tant Graces." So I ſay here, the *Spirit* is ſaid then to inhabit, and keep Houſe in us; not as ſoon as it is entertained and received, but when it breaks forth into Acts, and declares it ſelf before all Men, *when Men ſee our good Works, and glorify our Father*, Mat. v. 16. Before we were ſaid to *live in the Spirit*, now to *walk*, as you ſhall ſee the Phraſes uſed diſtinctly, *Gal.* v. 25. To *walk*, that is to go about conſpicuouſly in the ſight of all Men; breaking forth into Works, (as the Sun after the Diſperſions of a Miſt or Cloud) whereby all Men ſee and acknowledge his *Faith* and *Obedience*, and find their own evil Ways reprehended and made manifeſt by his good, as is noted in the 13th Verſe, *All Things that are reproved are made manifeſt by the Light.* † Semblable to which is that of the *Atheiſts* repining at the godly Man, *Wiſdom* ii. 14. *He is made to reprove our Thoughts.* Thus is the third Query reſolved alſo, *when this inward Principle enters.* Firſt, it comes as an *Harbenger*, in every outward Reſtraint by which God keeps us from ſinning. Secondly, it enters as a *Gueſt* in ſome Seaſon

* *Epiſt.* 105 *ad* Xyſtum. † *Luke.*

Seaſon or other; and *laſtly*, it comes and *dwells* with us, and ſhews it ſelf in Works.———

To the laſt Query, *What Works it performs*, the Anſwer ſhall be brief; every Thing that may be called *ſpiritual*, Faith, Repentance, Charity, Hope, Self-denial, and the reſt; but theſe not promiſcuouſly, or in an Heap altogether, but by a wiſe Diſpenſation, in Time and by Degrees. The Soul being enabled by this *inward Principle*, is equally diſpoſed to the producing of all theſe, and as Occaſions do occur, doth actually perform and produce them; ſo that in my Conceit that Queſtion concerning the Priority of Repentance or Faith, is not either of ſuch Moment or Difficulty, as is by ſome Diſputers pretended. The Seeds of them both are at one Time planted in the Soul; and then there is no Faith in any Subject but there is Repentance alſo; nor Repentance without Faith. So that where it is ſaid, *Without Faith 'tis impoſſible to pleaſe God in any Thing elſe*, 'tis true; but argues no neceſſary Precedence of it before other Graces, for the Habits of them all are of the ſame Age in us, and then alſo will it be as true, that without Repentance, or without Love, Faith it ſelf cannot pleaſe God; for if it be truly acceptable Faith, there is both Repentance and Love in the ſame Womb to keep it Company. Thus are we wont to ſay that *only Faith juſtifieth*, but not Faith *alone*: And the Reaſon theſe Promiſes in Scripture are made ſometimes to one Grace preciſely, ſometimes to another, is becauſe they are all at once

rooted

rooted in the Man ; in their Habits chain'd together inſeparably. Faith ſaves every Man that hath it, and yet the believing'ſt Man under Heaven ſhall not be ſaved without Charity. *Charity hides a Multitude of Sins*, and yet the charitableſt Man in the World ſhall never have his Score croſs'd without *Repentance*. A Catalogue of theſe Fruits of the SPIRIT you may at your Leiſure make up to your ſelves for your Tryal, out of the fifth to the *Galatians*, from the * 22d Verſe, and 1 *Peter* i. 5. All theſe Graces together though ſome belonging to one, ſome to another Faculty of the Soul, are yet all at *once* conceived in it ; at *once* begin their Life in the Heart, though one be perhaps ſooner ready to walk abroad, and ſhew it ſelf in the World than another.

By what hath been ſaid 'tis plain enough (though it might be much more amplified) that GRACE is of abſolute Neceſſity to the Performance of any holy Work acceptable to God ; that without it whatſoever is done in ſpiritual Matters is carnal, not indeed ſpiritual, but equivocally and abſurdly ſo called. The natural Man's Deſires of Heaven, are not Deſires of Heaven ; his Faith no Faith ; his Believing of the Scripture, Infidelity, becauſe he doth not apply

* Gal. v. 22, 23. *But the Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-ſuffering, Gentleneſs, Goodneſs*, Faith, *Meekneſs, Temperance: againſt ſuch there is no Law.*

1 Pet. i. 5. *Who are kept by the Power of God through* Faith *unto Salvation.*

apply them particularly to himſelf to obey them. In ſum, when he prays, hopes, or gives Alms, he does ſomewhat indeed, and 'tis well done of him; but he doth not truly either pray, or hope, or give Alms, there is ſome *Carnality* in them that hath poyſoned them, and quite altered the Complexion, the Conſtitution, and inward Qualities of the Work. And then indeed how impatient ſhould every Chriſtian be of this * *Coloquintida* within him? There's *mors in ollâ*, as the Prophet once ſpake, that's *Death in the Pot*, that ſo infects and kills every Thing that comes out of it. How ſhould we abhor, and loath, and deteſt this *old Leaven* that ſo beſowres all our Actions! This *Heathenism* of *unregenerate carnal Nature*, which makes our beſt Works ſo unchriſtian?

Having learnt what this *new Creature* is, and how abſolutely neceſſary to a *Chriſtian*; O let us not defer one Minute longer to examine our States, whether we are yet *renewed* or no; and by the Acts which we daily perform, obſerve whether the *ſanctifying Habit* be as yet infuſed into our Souls. If the Grounds of our beſt Duties, that which moves us in our holieſt Actions, be found upon Search to be but carnal; if a careful religious Education, Cuſtom of the Place which we live in, Fear of human Laws, nay perhaps a good ſoft tender Diſpoſition and the like, be the Things that make thee love God and perform holy Duties, and not any *inward*

* *The Fruit of a wild Gourd, of a bitter Taſte.*

Principle of Sanctity within thee, I counſel thee to think better of thine Eſtate, and conſider whether the like Motives had it ſo happen'd that thou hadſt been born and brought up in *Turky*, might not have made thee worſhip *Mahomet*. I would be ſorry to be rigid, I fear thou wilt find they might: Well then, a new courſe muſt be taken, all thy former heathen, carnal, or at beſt good moral Life, all thy formal Performances, the beſt of thy natural Deſires, muſt be content to be rank'd here with *Circumciſion* and *Uncircumciſion availing nothing*, there is no Truſt or Confidence to be placed on theſe *Egyptian* Staves of Reed, *Iſa.* xxxvi. 6. And then if thou wilt not live heartleſs for ever, if ever thou mean'ſt to move or walk, or do any thing, you muſt to that *Creator* of *Spirits* and *Lover* of *Souls*, and never leave ſolliciting, till he hath *breathed* another *Breath* into your Noſtrils, another *Soul* into your Soul. You muſt lay your ſelf at his Feet, and with all the Violence and Rhetorick, and Humility, that theſe Wants will prompt thee to, woo, and importune the *Holy Spirit* to overſhadow thee; to conceive all holy Graces ſpiritually in thee; and if thou canſt not ſuddenly receive a gracious Anſwer, that the *Holy Ghoſt* will come in unto thee, and lodge with thee this Night; yet learn ſo much Patience from thy beggarly Eſtate as not to challenge him at thy own Times, but comfortably to wait his Leiſure. There is Employment enough for thee in the while to prepare the Room againſt his Coming, to make Uſe of all his common Graces, to cleanſe and

reform

reform thy foul Corruptions, that when the *Spirit* comes it may find thee *ſwept and garniſht*. All the outward Means which God hath afforded thee, he commands thee to make uſe of, and will require it at thy hands in the beſt meaſure, even *before* thou art *regenerate*, tho' thou *ſin* in all thy *unregenerate* Performances, for want of inward Sanctity, yet 'tis better to have obeyed imperfectly, than not at all: The firſt is *Weakneſs*, the other deſperate *Preſumption*; the firſt material *partial* Obedience, the ſecond *total* Diſobedience. Yet whilſt thou art preparing, give not over praying, they are Acts very * competible; thou may'ſt do them both together. Whilſt thou art a fortifying theſe little Kingdoms within thee, ſend theſe Embaſſadors abroad for Help, that thou may'ſt be capable of it when it comes. But above all Things be *circumſpect*, watch and obſerve the *Spirit*, and be perpetually ready to receive its *Blaſts*, let it never have *breathed* on thee in vain; let thine Ear be for ever open to its *Whiſperings*: If it ſhould paſs by thee either not heard, or not underſtood, 'twere a Loſs that all the Treaſures upon Earth could not repair; and for the moſt Part you know it comes not in the *Thunder*. CHRIST ſeldom ſpeaks ſo loud now a-days as he did to *Saul*, Acts ix. 'Tis in a *ſoft ſtill Voice*, and I will not promiſe you that Men that dwell in a Mill, that are perpetually engaged in worldly loud Employments, or that Men *aſleep*, ſhall ever come to hear of it. The

* *Convenient.*

Sum of all my Exhortation is, after Examination, to cleanſe, and pray, and watch; carefully to cleanſe thy ſelf, inceſſantly to pray, and diligently to watch for the SUN of Righteouſneſs, when he ſhall begin to dawn, and riſe and ſhine in thy Heart by *Grace*.

And do thou O Holy Lord, work this whole Work in us; prepare us by thy outward, *perfect* us by thy inward Graces; awaken us out of the Darkneſs of Death, and plant a *new Seed* of holy *Light* and *Life* in us: Infuſe into our heathen Hearts a Chriſtian Habit of Sanctity, that we may perform all *ſpiritual* Duties of Holineſs; that we may glorify thee here by *thy Spirit*, and be glorified with thee by thy CHRIST hereafter.

The Nature and Neceſſity of REGENERATION Or the NEW-BIRTH.

By Biſhop HOPKINS.

John iii. 5. *Jeſus anſwer'd, verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, except a Man be born of* Water, *and of the* Spirit, *he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*

THE former Part of this Chapter in which Diviſion theſe Words fall, reports the Conference that paſſed between Chriſt and *Nicodemus.* Their Diſcourſe is concerning the great Myſtery of the *New-birth*, of which this Night-diſciple had but a dark and midnight Conception.———*Can a Man*, ſays he, *be born when he is old; can he enter the ſecond Time into his Mother's Womb and be born:* No doubt but this learned *Rabbi* thought he had brought a gravelling Inſtance againſt this new Doctrine of the *New-birth*; ſuch ignorant Pieces are the moſt Wiſe and Learned, when they attempt by Reaſon to ſearch out thoſe *myſterious Effects* of God's SPIRIT, which cannot be known otherwiſe than by *Illumination* and *Experience:* Our Saviour therefore in the Words of the Text takes off this groſs and ill-conceited Objection, and tells him that he ſpeaks not of a carnal, but of a ſpiritual *Regeneration* and *Birth*, whereby we are begotten again to a *lively Hope*, and are made

made the *Children* of God, and ſo ſilenceth thoſe impertinent Impoſſibilities on which *Nicodemus* inſiſted. *Except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he can in no wiſe enter into the Kingdom of God.* Theſe Words are a Deſcription of a Chriſtian's *New-birth*, which is here ſet forth by the efficient Cauſe of it, Water and the Spirit; and alſo by the abſolute Neceſſity of it unto Eternal Life.——To be born of Water and the Spirit, may denote to us the Manner of the Spirit's proceeding in the Work of Regeneration, *Except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit*, that is, except he be renewed by the *Holy Ghoſt*, working as Water, leaving the ſame Effect upon the Soul, in cleanſing and purifying of it from ſinful Defilements, as Water doth upon the Body in waſhing off contracted Dirt and Filth: Nor indeed is this Manner of Expreſſion ſtrange to the *holy Scripture*; for *John* Baptiſt, *Mat.* iii. 11. ſpeaking of Chriſt, tells them, *that he ſhould baptize them with the Holy Ghoſt, and with Fire*; that is, he ſhould baptize them with the *Holy Ghoſt* working as Fire; for as Fire eats out and conſumes the Ruſt and Droſs of Metals; ſo thoſe that are *baptized* with the Spirit, are as it were plunged into that HEAVENLY FLAME, whoſe ſearching Energy devours all their Droſs, Tin, and baſe Allay. So then here alſo to be *born of Water and of the Spirit*, may be no more than to be born of the Spirit, purifying the Soul, even as Water purifies the Body; ſo variouſly is the Efficiency of the *Holy Ghoſt* in the Work of *Regeneration* expreſſed in *Scripture* Language,

Language, it conſumes our Droſs as Fire, and waſheth off our Filth as Water.——Or again it may be underſtood thus, Except a Man be renewed by the Efficacy of the *Holy Ghoſt* cleanſing the *inward* Man from Sin, as Water cleanſeth the *outward* Man from Filth, he ſhall never enter into Heaven.——REGENERATION is a Change of the whole Man in every Part and Faculty thereof, from a State of ſinful Nature to a State of ſupernatural Grace, whereby the Image of God that we defaced and loſt by our firſt Tranſgreſſion, is again in ſome good meaſure reſtored.——REGENERATION reſtores us to that Part of God's Image that conſiſts in holy and ſpiritual Habits, that rectifies the Operations of our natural Faculties and Powers. The Mind is illuminated with true Knowledge, the Will is made compliant to God's Will, and the Affections are called off from the Purſuit of Vanity, and ſet upon ſpiritual and heavenly Objects; and this is *that Image* of God that is drawn upon our Souls in our *Regeneration*, whereby we are made like to God, yea, ſo like to him, that the Apoſtle in 1 *Pet.* ii. 4. calls it, *a Participation of the Divine Nature.*—

Nicodemus being convinced of Chriſt's extraordinary Miſſion by the Miracles that he wrought, courts him with Terms full of humble Reſpect, *Rabbi*, ſays he, *thou art a Teacher come from God, for no Man can do theſe Miracles that thou doſt, except God be with him*; to this our Saviour anſwers more pertinent to his

Salvation

Salvation than to his * *Chareſis*, *Except a Man be born again he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God:* As if he ſhould ſay, The *Miracles* that I do, prove my *Miſſion* that I am ſent of God, but I do greater *Miracles* than any thou haſt ſeen or heard of; thou haſt heard perhaps that I reſtore Sight to thoſe that are blind, and Life to thoſe that are dead; but I am come to give Eyes to thoſe that do already ſee, and to give Life to thoſe that do already live; I am come to cauſe thoſe that are already born to be born again, and this is a Miracle that muſt be wrought upon thee, and upon *all* that ſhall be *ſaved*, to turn Fleſh into Spirit, to faſhion Lumps of Clay into the glorious Similitude of the Image of God; this is the greateſt of all Miracles, and this great Miracle muſt be wrought upon all, for except this be done, ſays our Saviour, no Man can enter into Heaven.

The Words contain in them, firſt, a general Propoſition, *A Man cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Secondly, an exceptive Limitation added to this general Propoſition, *Except a Man be born again*; and both theſe do deliver to us this Propoſition or doctrinal Obſervation: *That* Regeneration, *or the* New-birth *is of abſolute Neceſſity unto Eternal Life.*

There is no other Change ſimply neceſſary but only this: If thou art *poor*, thou may'ſt ſo continue, and yet be ſaved; if thou art *deſpiſed*, thou

* *Compliment or kind Salutation.*

thou may'ſt ſo continue, and yet be ſaved; if thou art *unlearned*, thou may'ſt continue ſo, and yet be ſaved; only *one Change* is neceſſary, if thou art wicked and ungodly, and continueſt ſo, Chriſt who hath the Keys of Heaven, who ſhutteth and no Man openeth, hath himſelf doomed thee, that thou ſhalt in no wiſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. This is alſo definitively pronounced by the Apoſtle *Heb.* xii. 14. *Without Holineſs no Man ſhall ſee the Lord.*

In the Proſecution of this Doctrine, I ſhall firſt give you ſome Demonſtration of it and then apply it.

Very difficult it is to perſuade Men againſt the Prejudices of their corrupt Hearts; this *great Change*, ſay they, is more than needs: *Regeneration* begins now to be derided by as great Maſters in *Iſrael* as ever *Nicodemus* was; many underſtand not to what End the Fabrick of corrupt Nature ſhould be demoliſhed, and Men as it were turned out of themſelves; they think, if they are but baptized, whereby, as they ſuppoſe, the Guilt of *Original Sin* is waſhed away, and that a ſober religious Life, keeping from groſs actual Sins, is ſufficient for the obtaining of Heaven without thoſe hard and inexplicable Notions of *Regeneration* and the *New-birth*. I ſhall therefore endeavour to convince you of the indiſpenſible Neceſſity that there is of *being born again*, that ſo when you are perſuaded of it, you may give no Reſt to your ſelves, nor unto God, till he cauſe his

Spirit, which is *that Wind* that bloweth where it liſteth, to breathe *ſpiritual Life* into you, without which it is impoſſible that you ſhould inherit Eternal Life.

Firſt, therefore conſider, There is an Identity or Sameneſs betwixt *Grace* and *Glory*, and therefore it is that *Regeneration* is ſo neceſſary unto *Salvation*. What is that illuſtrious Thing that we call the *Glory* of Heaven? Is it that we ſhall outſhine the Brightneſs of the Sun? Or that we ſhall tread on a Pavement of Stars? Is it a Freedom from Diſeaſes, Pains, and Death? Is it that we ſhall hear the Melody and Songs of Saints and Angels? Theſe Things indeed and whatever the Heart of Man can deſire or imagine to be excellent, do fill up this bleſſed Eſtate; but yet that which chiefly conſtitutes Heaven is *Holineſs*, that very Holineſs that wicked Men, who yet preſumptuouſly hope to inherit Heaven, do yet deſpiſe and hate on Earth. We ſhall there be united to God by *Love*, depend on him by *Faith*, obey him with *Delight*, and that with the very ſame Love, Faith, and Delight, as we do here on Earth; only theſe Graces ſhall then be exalted above all Imperfections and Frailties, this is the *Glory* of Heaven. The Glory of God himſelf conſiſts eſpecially in his *infinite Holineſs*, and therefore in that moſt triumphant Song of *Moſes* in *Exod.* xv. 11. God is ſtiled *glorious in Holineſs, fearful in Praiſes*: but *glorious in Holineſs*; why now the Glory of the Saints in Heaven is but a Reflection caſt upon them from the

the Glory of God, and therefore as he is *eſpecially glorious in Holineſs*, ſo are they alſo glorious in their Holineſs. Why now if *Grace* and *Glory* be the very ſame Thing, canſt thou, O Sinner, ever hope for Glory without Grace? Or is not this the Heaven that thou doſt deſire and hope for? Is it a Place of Eaſe and Pleaſure only that thou wiſheſt, where thou may'ſt be free from Cares and Fears, from Sorrows and ſad Hours? Why this is impoſſible, ſuch a Heaven God never made, nor canſt thou in reaſon expect, for God hath ſo linked *Sin* and the *Curſe* together, that *Heaven* it ſelf would be no Sanctuary to thee from the Regrets and Stingings of Conſcience, nor from the Horror and ghaſtly Fear of Wrath, if Sin and Guilt ſhall enter there with thee.

Secondly, *Unregenerate* Men are utterly unſuitable to this State of Glory, and therefore there muſt neceſſarily intervene this great Change of *Regeneration*.——There are none admitted to be free Citizens of the New *Jeruſalem*, but only ſuch who have firſt ſerved out their Time of *Holineſs*, ſome more, ſome fewer Years here on Earth; the Work of Heaven muſt be learned in the Time of our Apprenticeſhip on Earth.—I ſpeak all this to convince wicked Men how weak, vain, and fooliſh a Thing it is for them to hope for *Happineſs* without endeavouring after this *great Change*; Miſery purſues them even to Heaven it ſelf, and they would not be happy even there. Certain it is, God never beſtows *Heaven* upon any, but beforehand he

makes them agreeable to its Holineſs by their own.——Well therefore, as ever you hope for *Heaven*; and I dare aſſure my ſelf that this is the Hope of all of you, make ſure then to your ſelves this *great Change*; it is no Notion that I have now preached unto you, your *Natures* and your *Lives* muſt be changed, or believe it, you will be found at the laſt Day under the Wrath of God, for God will not change or alter the Word that is gone out of his Mouth, he hath ſaid it, Chriſt who is the Truth and Word of God hath pronounced it, that without this *New-birth* or Regeneration, no Man ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God.

Thirdly, Whatſoever a Man doth in a State of *Unregeneracy* is Sin, and therefore the Change of *Regeneration* is abſolutely neceſſary unto Eternal Life.——The *Principle* from whence all the Actions of an *unregenerate* Man flows is corrupt, and when the Fountain is corrupt, the Streams alſo that iſſue from thence muſt needs be tainted. That *Principle* that is neceſſarily required to make our Actions to be truly good and holy is the *ſincere* and *ſuperlative* Love of God. What we do becomes then a good Action when we do it from the commanding Motive of *Divine Love*; and therefore our Saviour ſaith in *John* xiv. 24. *He that loveth me not keepeth not my Sayings.* Our whole Duty conſiſteth either in that which immediately reſpects God, or in that which immediately reſpects Man; and accordingly God hath compriſed the whole Law in *two Tables*, in the one he preſcribes the

Services

Services due to himſelf, and in the other he requires from us what is due to Men, and both theſe are fulfilled by Love; ſo ſaith the Apoſtle *Rom.* xiii. 10. LOVE *is the Fulfilling of the Law*; and therefore our Saviour reduceth all the Ten Commandments into Two, in *Mat.* xxiii. 37, 38, 39. *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Might, this is the firſt Commandment, and the ſecond is like unto it, thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf.* Our Saviour reduceth all into Two, and theſe Two ſpeak but one and the ſame Thing, LOVE, which is the Fulfilling of the Commandment. Now this teacheth us, that whatever external Conformity our Actions may carry in them to the Letter of the Law, yet are they not *true Obedience* to God's Commandments, if they flow not from a Principle of Love. Tho' you may perform each particular Duty required in each particular Command, yet this is not fulfilling but tranſgreſſing of the Law, if what we do is not done out of a Principle of *Divine Love*; this is that univerſal Qualification that can alone make our Duties truly good and acceptable unto God; ſo that either to do contrary to the Law, or to do Actions that the Law requires without *Love* to God are both of them Sins, the one againſt the expreſs Letter, and the other againſt the true Senſe of the Law. Now no *unregenerate* Man can act any Thing from this *divine Principle* of the Love of God, for this is implanted in us only by *Regeneration*, and therefore it is ſaid 1 *John* iv. 7. *Every one that* LOVETH *is born of God.*

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The only Way that leads to Heaven and Happineſs is *Faith* and good Works; not ſuch equivocal good Works as moſt Men rely upon, but ſuch genuine ones as have the *Love of God* for their Principle, and the *Glory of God* for their End; and ſuch no *unregenerate* Man can produce, all the reſt are but Traſh and Lumber, and ſuch as will rather burthen than crown your Souls at the laſt Day.——

HEAVEN in Scripture is promiſed to be given by way of *Inheritance*, and no otherwiſe: So you have it in *Acts* xx. 32. and in *Acts* xxvi. 18. and in many other Places. Now an *Inheritance* denotes Sonſhip; and God will not give that Inheritance unto any but to thoſe that are his own Children. We are all of us naturally Strangers to God, and before we can become his Children we muſt be *new-born*, and by this *New-birth* it is that we are made Heirs of *Glory*, and Co-heirs with Jeſus Chriſt our Elder Brother, and therefore *Regeneration* is abſolutely neceſſary unto Eternal Salvation.———

The Will of an unregenerate Man uſually is very *irrational*. He would obtain the End, but yet he will not uſe the Means; *Grace* he would willingly have, but you cannot bring his averſe Will to cloſe with the Performance of thoſe unpleaſing and irkſome Duties wherein God uſually beſtows *Grace*. Could they be holy with a Wiſh, and ſuddenly metamorphoſed to other Men, none ſhould be better Chriſtians than themſelves; Could they enter into Heaven by being

being willing to have it, none ſhould ſhine higher in *Glory* than they; but when ſo much hard and unpleaſing Work muſt be done firſt, that they may be *regenerate*, and then after that they are regenerate to perfect them for *Glory*, they look upon theſe Things at a great diſtance and afar off, and ſo they ſit down with idle Wiſhes far ſhort of *Grace* and *Glory*.———

To eſcape the Pollutions of the World is no Argument of the *Truth* of *Grace*, unleſs your ſelves alſo are cleanſed from the Pollutions of your own Hearts; for Sins may be left merely from external forced Principles, ſuch as are the Terrors of Conſcience, or the heavy Judgments of God.——Men may gather up their looſe and diſſolute Lives within the Compaſs of Civility and moral Honeſty, and yet they may be utter Strangers to a Work of *true* and *ſaving* Grace; and this may be aſcribed to two grounds, partly to the Convictions of God's Spirit awakenning natural Conſcience to ſee the Horror, and to foreſee the Danger that is in ſuch infamous Sins; and partly to Prudence, that they have gained from the frequent Experiences that they have had of the manifold Inconveniences that they brought upon themſelves by ſuch Sins formerly. Theſe two may make a great Amendment in Men's Lives and Converſations, and yet both theſe, Convictions and Prudence, fall ſhort of *true regenerating* Grace.——A Man may diſcourſe of ſpiritual Myſteries copiouſly and clearly; he may have Gifts of Knowledge and Utterance; he may preach with Evidence

and

and Demonſtration, and pray with Enlargement and Affection, and yet notwithſtanding all this, be an utter Stranger to a *ſaving* Work of Grace.——

But, it will be expedient briefly to premiſe ſomething concerning the Manner of obtaining *Aſſurance* of Grace, by the Signs and Characters of Grace.

In the firſt Place therefore, it is poſſible for a Chriſtian to attain an *aſſured* Knowledge of his *Regeneration*. I ſay, an *aſſured* Knowledge, to carry it higher than the *Papiſts* do, that allow no more than a *conjectural Probability*, which may well enough preſerve from Diſpair, but yet doth not exclude all Fears and Doubtings: But it is no wonder that they that will not truſt their *natural* Senſes in the Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*, ſhould not much leſs truſt their *ſpiritual* Senſes in the Doctrine of *Aſſurance*. A Chriſtian's *Aſſurance* is many Degrees above theſe *weak Gueſſes*, and arrives at a far greater Certainty than any Demonſtration can be; for the Evidence of Senſe and Reaſon is not ſo clear as that of *Aſſurance* is: The Teſtimony that Senſe and Reaſon gives is but *human*, but the Teſtimony given in a Chriſtian's Aſſurance is *divine*, and therefore is far more certain, and more infallible. The Apoſtle groundeth the Evidence of *Aſſurance* upon the *Divinity* of the Witneſs, in *Rom.* viii. 16. *The* SPIRIT *it ſelf* (mark that) *beareth witneſs with our Spirits that we are the Children of God.*

The

The Spirit it ſelf beareth witneſs, and what God ſpeaks is infinitely more certain than that which our very Eyes ſee; and therefore it is very injurious to his Truth and Veracity, when he by the *ſecret* and *ſweet Whiſperings* of his Spirit informs the Soul that it is in a State of *Grace*, to think that this Teſtimony only gives probable Gueſſes and Conjectures.

The *Witneſs* that the Spirit gives is ſuch a *full Aſſurance* as removes all Doubts and Fears, for it is the *Witneſs* of God himſelf. Now ſuch a Witneſs as this is a Chriſtian may have, and therefore it is *poſſible*, and it neceſſarily follows alſo that he may have a *full Aſſurance* beyond all Doubts and Fears; nor is this poſſible by way of Revelation, as a ſpecial Privilege indulged only to ſome few, and them the choiceſt of God's Servants, for in 2 *Pet.* i. 10. the Apoſtle exhorts ALL Chriſtians, *to give diligence to make their Callings and Elections ſure*, which he would never do were it an Impoſſibility, and could not be obtained with *our Diligence*; ſo in 2 *Cor.* xiii. 5. *Examine your ſelves*, ſays the Apoſtle, *whether ye be in the Faith*; *prove your ſelves*; *know ye not that Jeſus Chriſt is* IN *you except you be Reprobates.* Reprobation in this Place, by the way doth not ſtand oppoſed to the Decree of Election, as if none were elected but thoſe that were already actually in Chriſt, but it ſtands oppoſed to Approbation, for God doth not approve of any *in whom* Chriſt is not formed; now, ſays the Apoſtle, ſince you know this, try and prove your ſelves whether Chriſt be IN you.

But it were a vain Thing to put a Chriſtian upon Self-examination and Trial, if there were no ordinary Means to attain to the *Knowledge* of it, but he muſt expect and depend upon ſome extraordinary Revelation from Heaven, a Thing that is never but rarely given unto ſome few. It is true, among Chriſtians ſome may not have this *Aſſurance* at all, and none have at all Times. As in a Walk that is ſhaded with Trees, and chequer'd with Light and Shadow, ſome Tracts and Paths in it are dark, and others are Sun-ſhine: Such is uſually the Life of the moſt aſſured Chriſtian, ſometimes he walks *in the Light of God's Countenance*, and rejoices in the Smiles of his Favour, and at other Times he walks in Darkneſs, and can ſee no Light, he ſteps out of the *bright Manifeſtations* of God's Love into the Umbrages of ſad and cloudy Apprehenſions concerning his preſent State of *Grace*, and his future State of *Glory*; ſo that ſome Chriſtians never have any *full Aſſurance* at all, and no Chriſtian hath this *full Aſſurance* at all Times. Now this Inequality of *Aſſurance* proceeds from a double Cauſe: *Firſt*, Sometimes from the free and various Diſpenſations of the *Spirit* who is arbitrary in his Workings, who is *that Wind* that bloweth when and where he pleaſeth: For the Treaſures as well of *Comfort*, as of *Grace*, are in his Hand; as the Sun diſpoſeth to the Soul its ſummer and winter Days according to its Approaches to, or Receſſes from it. *Seeondly*, Sometimes it ariſeth from new contracted Guilt that blots our Evidences, and makes them illegible till it be taken off again.

again. It is frequent with Chriſtians when they have done ſinfully or hypocritically in one particular Inſtance, then they begin to queſtion all their Sincerity, and upon the Prevalence of one Corruption to doubt of the Truth of all their Graces. We do not therefore affirm that there is in *all*, or may be in any at *all* Times this *full Aſſurance*, but in *ſome* there is, and *in all* there is *Ground* for it, and a *Poſſibility* by Diligence to attain it; give Diligence to make your Callings and Elections ſure, that's the firſt Thing.

Secondly, The Marks and Signs of our Regeneration in which the Scripture abounds, are of themſelves inſufficient to raiſe us to a *full Aſſurance* without the *Teſtimony* of the holy Spirit of God. This I doubt not but appears very clear to thoſe who have taken Pains to ſearch out their *ſpiritual Eſtate* by Marks and Signs; if the Spirit comes not in to ſatisfy them by his *own Witneſs*, they may ſoon run themſelves to a Loſs, and at the End ſet down as doubtful and perplex'd as when they firſt begun. As for Inſtance, if a gracious Soul ſhould call into queſtion the Truth and Sincerity of his Love to God, and ſhould begin to examine himſelf; how ſhall I know whether I do indeed love God? Why the *Scripture* tells me, by keeping his Commandments, by obeying him ſincerely; yea, but the *Sincerity* of our Obedience is as difficult to be known as the Sincerity of our Love, and how ſhall I know whether my Obedience be ſincere? Now here, though many Signs might be given as Evidences of this, yet

ſtill the doubting Soul will be driving of it ſelf from one Sign to another, and never find Satisfaction in any of them, unleſs the Spirit of God comes in by its *undeniable Witneſs* to ſilence all its Objections, and to reſolve all its Doubts by a kind of *peremptory* and *diſcuſſive* VOICE that it is ſo, otherwiſe there is no End of looking after Signs, for they will ſtill leave the Soul full of Perplexities; unleſs the Spirit of God comes in as a *ſatisfactory Witneſs*, we may run from one Sign to another Sign to enquire after *Grace* whether it be *there* and *there*, and when all is done, we may be as much at a Loſs concerning the Grace which we enquired after: And there are two Reaſons why Signs of Grace without the *Teſtimony* of the Spirit cannot work in us a *full* and *abſolute Aſſurance*.

Firſt, Becauſe uſually one Grace is the Sign of another. Signs of Grace are Graces themſelves, and therefore ſtand in need to be evidenced by other Signs, and them Signs being Graces too, do ſtand in need to be evidenced by others, and ſo we ſhould run to an *Infinitum*, unleſs the Spirit of God by *his Witneſs* puts a Stop to this Search.

Secondly, Becauſe moſt of the Signs and Evidences of *true Grace* may be ſo exactly counterfeited by Hypocrites, that the Judgment that we paſs upon our ſelves *by theſe alone*, will ſtill leave place for perplexing Doubts and Fears, leſt all our Graces, and all our Signs of them too, ſhould be but hypocritical Deluſions. So then

then unto a *full Aſſurance* there is neceſſarily required *an inward peremptory Witneſs* of the Holy Ghost: Signs and Marks without his infallible *Teſtimony* are inſignificant and unſatisfactory Things.

Thirdly, That *Aſſurance* that Chriſtians have of their *Regeneration*, is not wrought in them merely by the Teſtimony of the *Spirit* without the Help of Signs and Marks. As Marks and Signs cannot raiſe up to a full Aſſurance without the Spirit of God, ſo neither do we obtain a *full Aſſurance* merely by the Teſtimony of the Spirit without the Help of Signs and Marks; for to what End doth the *Scripture* ſo much abound in giving Characters of Men's States, which is the main Scope and Drift of the whole firſt Epiſtle of St. *John*, theſe were all ſuperfluous, if the uſual Way of the Spirit's evidencing were without them. I am regenerated, but how come I to be *aſſured* of this? Not barely becauſe the Spirit teſtifies to me that I am ſo: That looks too much like Enthuſiaſm, and a wild and groundleſs Deluſion; but the Spirit proceeds in a more rational Way, I am a Chriſtian and regenerated becauſe I find thoſe Marks upon me that can belong to none, but to ſuch who are ſo. Indeed all our Aſſurance muſt be ultimately reſolved into the alone *Verdict* of the Spirit of God, and that without the Help of further Signs and Marks; for when a Chriſtian gains Aſſurance, he doth not with the *Sun* run through all the Signs of the *Zodiack* to know if he be a Chriſtian by this and this Sign, and

and then to try the Truth of that Sign by another, and that other by a third, and ſo onward, that were endleſs and unſatisfactory: But when he is brought to Signs that lie a Remove or two off from the Grace that he enquires after, he doth not uſually make a farther Search whether they be truly in him or not, but the Spirit darts in *a clear and heavenly Light* that diſcovers them to him not *diſcourſorily* only but *intuitively*, ſo as that he is able to ſay they are in me beyond all Deceit.

Fourthly, The uſual Way whereby Chriſtians come to be *aſſured* of their *Regeneration*, is by the joint Teſtimony both of Marks and Signs of Grace, and alſo by the Spirit's *witneſſing* to us that theſe Marks and Signs are in us. The *Word* and the *Spirit* are the Twin-lights that diſcover to us our Condition. And as *Mariners* preſage to themſelves a proſperous Voyage when two Lights *Caſtor* and *Pollux* appear, but a dangerous Voyage if only one appears: So here it is unſafe in the Trial of our *Regeneration* to take up with one ſingle ſolitary Light; but when both the Light of *Scripture* Marks and Signs, and alſo of the *Spirit's witneſſing* appear together, we may then proſperouſly and happily proceed to a Diſcovery of our ſelves. So in *Rom.* viii. 16. *The Spirit beareth witneſs with our Spirits that we are the Children of God.* To evidence that we are *born again* there comes in a two-fold Witneſs, the Witneſs of *our Spirits*, and the Witneſs of *God's Spirit*; our Spirit depoſeth that we are ſo,

ſo, that we are *born again*, and become the Children of God, and this it doth by obſerving the proper Marks and Characters that the *Scripture* gives of a Child of God; and the *Spirit of God* comes in as another Witneſs, that in the Mouth of two Witneſſes this may be eſtabliſhed, and by his IMMEDIATE LIGHT clears up the Truth of that Atteſtation that *Conſcience* did make, which takes away all Doubtings and Heſitancies, and fills with a *full Aſſurance*, yea, gives us a *Plerothy*; ſo that ſtill Marks and Signs are of great Uſe for the Diſcovery of the *Truth of Grace*. In 1 *John* ii. 3. *By this we know that we know him if we keep his Commandments*: But ſtill we may be puzzled to know whether our keeping of God's Commandments be ſuch a Ground for our Comfort, therefore the *Witneſs* of the *Spirit* is here required to *ſeal* and *confirm* this unto us, without which ſtill we ſhall be to ſeek Aſſurance for all the Marks that the *Scripture* lays down for Evidences of our Graces.

Theſe Things I thought fit to premiſe before I give you any Signs and Marks of *Regeneration*, that ſo you may be exhorted and moved when you hear thoſe Signs that the *Scripture* gives to examine your Hearts whether they are tranſcribed within you, and alſo to lift up your Hearts unto God, that his Spirit may *dart into you* ſuch a *ſpiritual Light* and clear Illumination, as may infallibly demonſtrate to you that theſe Marks are *indeed* in you; it being the proper Work of one and the ſame Spirit to work

Grace

Grace in us, and to *manifeſt it to us*; it is *he alone* that can draw that Curtain that hangs before it, and give us a View of it: As it is the Light of the Sun only by which we can ſee the Sun, ſo is it the Light of the Spirit only by which we can know the Spirit to be only in us. Let us therefore in the Trial of our ſelves look to Marks and Signs for a Teſtimony *in our own Conſciences*, without which all our Aſſurance may well be ſuſpected for Enthuſiaſm; and let us alſo beg the *Teſtimony* of the Spirit, without which all Marks and Signs will be but vain and unſatisfactory.

Now to give you ſome Signs of the *Truth* of Grace, I ſhall not inſiſt upon all that might be mentioned, for they are very numerous, ſince there is no one Grace but it is the Sign of another Grace, yea, the Sign of all other, for all Graces are concomitant, I ſhall only therefore ſelect out a few.

And the firſt is this, *It is a good Sign of Grace when a Man is willing to ſearch and examine himſelf whether he be gracious or not.* There is a certain kind of Inſtinct in a Child of God, whereby he naturally deſires to have the Title of his *Legitimation* tried, whereas a Hypocrite dreads nothing more than to have his Rottenneſs ſearcht into. *David* therefore prays, *Pſal.* xxvi. 2. *Examine me*, ſays he, *O Lord, and prove me, try my Reins and my Heart.* God indeed hath many Ways of trying us, but eſpecially by the Word and Miniſtry. The *Scripture*

ture is the great Treaſury of all ſpiritual Light; God hath amaſſed and ſtored it up all there, and whatever comes with ſpiritual Illumination upon the Conſcience muſt borrow it from thence; the Preaching of the Word that is the darting abroad of thoſe Beams that makes them pierce into the very Entrails of Sinners; and diſcovers the ſecret Thoughts and Intents of their Hearts. Now try your ſelves by this, do you love the Word of God becauſe it is a *ſearching* Word; becauſe it brings home Convictions to you, and ſhakes your carnal Confidences and Preſumptions? Do you love a Soul-ſearching Miniſtry that ranſacks your very Souls, and tells you all that ever you did? Do you delight in a Miniſtry that forceth you to *turn inward* upon your ſelves, that makes you tremble and look pale at every Word for fear it ſhould be the Sentence of your Damnation? This is a Sign that your Condition is good, becauſe you are ſo willing to be ſearched. *He that doth Evil*, ſaith our Saviour, *John* iii. 20. *hateth the Light*, neither *cometh he to it leſt his Deeds ſhould be reproved.* But if you are pleaſed only with a *formal, general Miniſtry*, and ſuch Prophets as ſing only pleaſant Songs to you, ſuch as never touch'd the Conſcience to the quick; that keep aloof off, and inſtead of brandiſhing the Word that is *ſharper than a two-edged Sword*, reaving the Heart with it, they only make a Flouriſh of it; if you can brook no other but ſuch a quiet unconcerning Miniſtry as this is, this is a bad Sign that yet you are unſound. *A Thief hateth the Light*, ſays our Saviour, *leſt he ſhould be*

detected and discovered; so a hypocritical Professor hateth that a Beam of spiritual Light by the Ministry of the Word should break in upon his Conscience to shew how rotten and unsound he is; and that's the first Trial: It is a Sign of a good Estate when a Man is willing to put himself on the Trial.

Secondly, Love to those who are truly godly, is a certain and infallible Sign of *Regeneration*, 1 *John* iii. 18. *We know that we are passed from Death to Life, because we love the Brethren.* This is a *certain Sign* a mighty Change is wrought on the *Heart*; for *naturally* we are inclin'd to hate the *Children* of God upon that very Account because they are *godly*. It is a Rule of the Schoolmen borrowed out of *Aristotle*, that the Affections of the Soul are the same towards the Image of a Thing as they are towards the Thing it self. If we love or hate any Person we shall accordingly love or hate his Picture and Resemblance. Now all wicked Men naturally hate God because he is a holy God, and thereby is contrary to their very Natures that are corrupt and sinful, and so they also hate the Children of God because they are living Pictures of God, and bear his Image upon them, being made conformable to him by a Work of *Regeneration*. *He that is born of the Flesh*, says the Apostle, *will persecute and hate him that is born after the Spirit*, because he is the Copy of that Original betwixt whom and them there is an *Antipathy* founded in their very Natures. Now when a Man who before did

did thus *hate*, *ſcorn*, and *deſpiſe* the People of God as a Company of *affected* and *turbulent* Hypocrites, ſhall find in himſelf a *Love* and *Eſteem* for them; and ſhall ſee the Beauty and Glory of that Holineſs that before render'd them odious to them; this is a Sign that *certainly* a mighty Change is wrought upon *that* Man, and that he himſelf is transformed into the Image of God, becauſe he loves that Image in others. Now this *Tryal* will proceed upon theſe two or three Particulars.

Firſt, *That this Love be to them becauſe they are godly.* We may poſſibly love godly Men for other Reſpects, becauſe they are wiſe or learned, or becauſe poſſibly they love us, or are related to us; but theſe are but By-reſpects, and *Grace* hath no Intereſt at all in them. That Love to the Godly that can aſſure us of being *godly* and *regenerate*, muſt be a Love to the Children of God merely becauſe they are *godly*.

Secondly, As we muſt love them becauſe they are godly, ſo the more godly they are the more we ſhould love them. *My Delight*, ſays DAVID, *is in the Saints, and in the excellent Ones of the Earth.* The more holy a Child of God is, if we love him aright, the more we ſhall love him.

Thirdly, If we love ALL that are *godly*; not only thoſe of our Temper, Conſtitution, and Opinion in all Things, but ALL of them

them, with a Valuation and Eſteem for them, with a prizing Love, which the Image of God upon their Souls and their Similitude to him challengeth; indeed our Familiarity and Intimacy may be with ſome of them more than with others, but our high and *cordial* Eſteem muſt be of ALL of them.

Now try your ſelves by this, *Do you love the* BRETHREN? And ſo little truly is this Love to be found, that the Name of *Brethren* is become a *Mock* and a *Jeſt* by many; but is your *Delight in the Saints?* Do you account them the *excellent Ones of the Earth?* How few are there that love them that love God? Or if they do love them, it is poſſibly for other Reſpects and Reaſons; could you not love them better if they were not ſo *rigid*, *ſtrict* and *preciſe* as they are: Let ſuch know as St. *John* ſpeaks in 1 *John* v. 1. *He that loveth him that begetteth, loveth him alſo that is* BEGOTTEN. It is in vain to think that we are *born* of God, if we have not a *ſincere* and *cordial Affection* for ALL thoſe that are Children of God, and our BRETHREN.

FINIS.